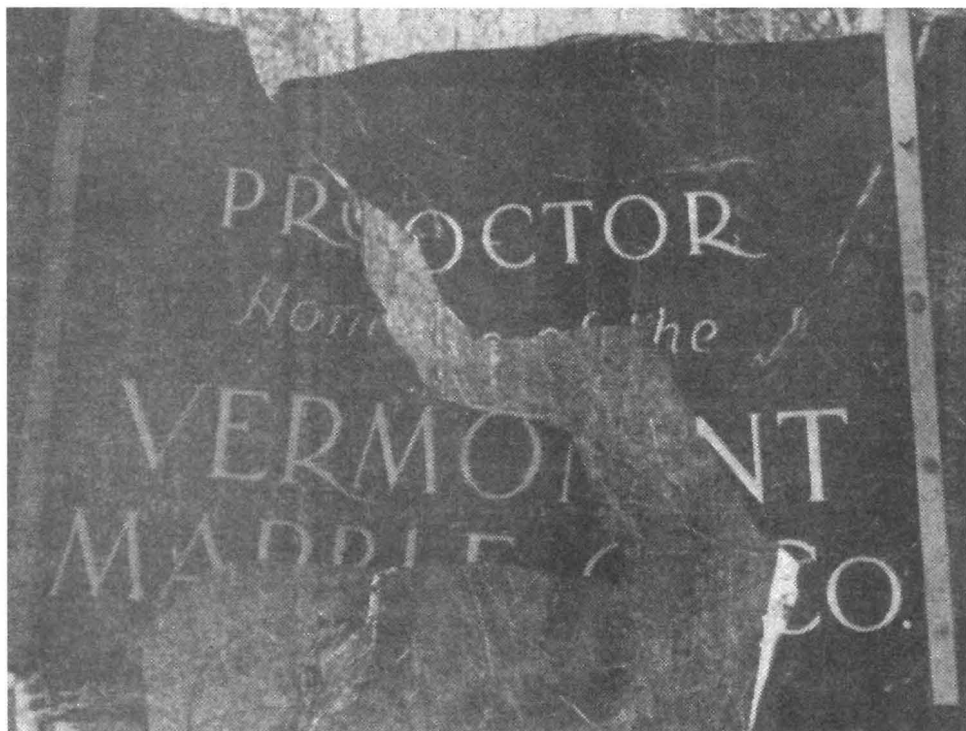


## The Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1966



*On 6 May 1966 the marble sign at the entrance to Proctor, which proclaimed it to be the home of the Vermont Marble Company, lay shattered. Inquiries as to the cause of the damage met only silence, although many people attributed the vandalism to strikers or their sympathizers.*

## About the Author



MARY FREGOSI

Mary H. Fregosi is a retired educator from Proctor and a member of the Rutland Historical Society who has written: "The Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1935-1936" (Vol. 32 No. 3), "A History of the Proctor Y.M.C.A. and the Sutherland Club" (Vol. 33 No. 1), "When the F.B.I. Came To Town: One of Vermont's Mysteries" (Vol. 38 No. 2), "Building the Proctor Marble Bridge: Conflict and Controversy (Vol. 38 No. 3), and "The Vermont Marble Company Stores" (Vol. 40 No. 2).

Mary, a Proctor native, has also written a History of the Proctor-Pittsford Country Club

and a History of Proctor High School Boy's Basketball.

## Introduction

Forty-five years ago there occurred a 56-day strike by employees in the marble division of the Vermont Marble Company. It was a time when European competition, particularly from Italy, was outbidding the domestic companies on projects by considerable margins. Workers, some of whom had been employed by the Company for years, began to feel the effects as supervisors cut back on overtime. Several who were fed up with their salaries left to find work in plants like General Electric in Rutland. Barton N. Reissig, vice-president of operations, noted in his annual report in 1965 that, "The Marble Division has been plagued with many problems this past year and there will be more and bigger ones in 1966." Little did he know at the time how prophetic these words would be. The perfect storm occurred when workers sat down with Company officials to negotiate a three year contract and demanded a union shop and a significant raise.

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# The Vermont Marble Company Strike of 1966

By Mary Fregosi

The United Stone and Allied Products Workers, AFL-CIO, which had been organized at the Vermont Marble Company in 1945, began negotiations for a new contract in 1966. Union membership had risen dramatically since late 1965 and in April its leaders could boast that 85% of the men were members. Ralph E. Williams, a national union representative, noted that there had been a sharp increase in membership because "...the employees got fed up with the conditions."<sup>1</sup> Negotiations had not been going well and the union threatened to strike if they did not get "a reasonable, fair and just contract." Part of that contract had to include a union shop and a thirty-five cent an hour increase over three years. The Vermont Marble Company had said "no" to the union shop and had offered a twenty-one cent raise over a three-year period. It felt that it had offered "a reasonable, fair and just contract." William H. Adams, vice president and public relations director for the Company, said that of the 22 proposals, the union told him that the most important one was the union shop and that without it, there would be no contract.<sup>2</sup> Under the Taft-Hartley Act a union shop required employees to join the union after 30 days of employment.

When no resolution was reached after five negotiation sessions, the union went on strike at midnight on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Federal mediator John O'Reilly requested that both sides meet with him on May 7<sup>th</sup> but it was clear that neither the Company nor the union would back down from the union shop position. Adams stated that, "We don't believe in the union shop...We believe every man should have the right to be a member of the union or not to be...This would give the union complete and unrestricted control of the employes (sic), and this is what we object to." Union leaders saw it differently. They reasoned that since the union represented all workers in bargaining they should have to join and support the union that contributed to their welfare. At the time of the strike a laborer was earning \$1.60 an hour while a carver was getting a top salary of \$2.21. Adams stated that the Company's proposal of eleven

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Babcock, "Strike Threat Looms At Marble Co.," *Rutland Herald*, 30 April 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Bob Babcock, "Strike Threat Looms At Marbled Co.," *Rutland Herald*, 30 April 1966.

cents an hour increase would be the highest paid wages in the U.S. in the marble industry.<sup>3</sup>

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> Company lawyers went to Superior Court to ask Judge Harold C. Sylvester to grant an injunction. He granted it at 9:30 p.m. that evening and set a deadline of 10:00 a.m. on May 6<sup>th</sup> as the date for a hearing to determine if the injunction were to be granted permanently. At that time the union would be asked to show cause why the injunction should not be continued. The injunction prohibited mass picketing, limited the number of pickets to five at any one place, and instructed them to remain at least five feet apart while picketing. Picketers were also prohibited from interfering with workers who wished to cross the lines, from interfering with Company trucks, and from trespassing on Company property.<sup>4</sup>



*Members of the United Stone and Allied Products Workers picketed the Vermont Marble Company just 12 hours before an injunction prohibited such mass picketing.*

Both groups geared up for the strike. Picket lines were set up around the Proctor branch, Center Rutland, West Rutland, and Danby mills. Tom Stafford, general superintendent of quarries, prepared for trouble

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<sup>3</sup> "Pickets Lines Set Vermont Marble Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 2 May 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Babcock, "Temporary Injunction Slapped on Striking Marble Workers," *Rutland Herald*, 3 May 1966.

by having puncture-proof tires put on his vehicle.<sup>5</sup> During the first day of the strike only 12 men crossed the picket line according to union representative Ralph Williams. There were two minor incidents. One occurred in Center Rutland when a young employee was roughed up as he attempted to report to work. The other encounter happened in Proctor when a union worker was accused of kicking in the side of a car. According to workers the damage was done by a member of the car owner's family. To ensure that the picketers maintained an orderly environment state police made periodic patrols. Frank Kynoski, a local union president, reported that about 100 men carried picket signs on a cold, raw day that saw several men go home to put on long johns and get thermoses of hot coffee. Kynoski remarked, "We are in the driver's seat now and we have 18 million AFL-CIO members behind us."<sup>6</sup>

The second day was not as orderly. Four or five power poles were burned in Florence that resulted in power being cut off from the White Pigment Corporation, a branch of the Vermont Marble Company. Adams stated that, "The picketing done today was not in accordance with the injunction. Some mass picketing and some intimidation did occur. Adams also said that management had spoken with several men who were afraid to work because of alleged threats that they had received from strikers.<sup>7</sup> One school boy was told that if he wanted to see his father again he better not report to work.<sup>8</sup> The second day of the strike also saw the only arrest that would occur during the 56-day walkout. In Danby one striker was arrested on breach of peace charges after an encounter with a non-striker in the town. This incident, however, did not occur on the picket lines. Robert Denko, a night watchman, had a rock thrown through his windshield as he was driving to work on May 4<sup>th</sup>. A couple of days prior to this incident he had had his tires slashed.<sup>9</sup>

An unscheduled meeting that lasted only twenty minutes was held at the Hotel Bardwell on May 4<sup>th</sup>. People began to realize that the strike would not be concluded in a short time. Meanwhile, anxious Rutland County merchants anticipated the effects that a prolonged strike would have on their businesses as they began to feel the lack of a \$91,000.00 a

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<sup>5</sup> F. Ray Keyser, interview by author, 21 September 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Babcock, "Temporary Injunction Slapped on Striking Marble Workers," *Rutland Herald*, 3 May 1966.

<sup>7</sup> Bob Babcock, "Power Cut In Marble Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 4 May 1966.

<sup>8</sup> F. Ray Keyser, interview by author, 12 September 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Bob Babcock, "Power Cut In Marble Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 4 May 1966.

week payroll.<sup>10</sup> An editorial in the May 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Rutland Herald* reflected the concern of many in the area. The editor noted that the stone working industries and the railroad were closely linked and were the foundation upon which the industrial economy of Rutland County was based. He alluded to the railroad strike that had ended in the collapse of the Rutland Railroad and feared that a marble strike might have the same kind of result.<sup>11</sup>

Both sides settled into the strike as events heated up. There were several fistfights, phone threats, and lots of rock throwing, reminiscent of the strike thirty years earlier. The verde antique "Welcome to Proctor Home of the Vermont Marble Company" sign on Route 3 was smashed and people attributed the vandalism to strikers or to their sympathizers. Labor and management alike were unwilling to issue statements to the press. Williams said, "We don't want to negotiate a settlement through the press." Picketers, on the other hand, were upset with reporters and shouted things like, "Get out of here," "Why don't you print our side?" and "Thanks for the lousy press."<sup>12</sup>

While the press did not appear to be sympathetic, strikers could rely on their brother union workers for support. Letters to the editor included some that were very supportive of the strike. One writer expressed his feelings about the poor wages paid by the Company. He wrote that it was not a case of the worker wanting more money but of the worker needing more money, as he was barely able to feed his family at the present wage.<sup>13</sup> A woman wrote that Company workers' lives were filled with "instability and insecurity." She lamented that after 25 years of work a man received a \$1.70 per hour wage, had two weeks of vacation, had no seniority rights, and received a \$2,000.00 life insurance with no pension plan except for social security.<sup>14</sup>

Not all letters were pro-striker. One signed "Irate" opined that destroying the marker on Route 3 did nothing to serve the strikers' cause and probably got more people on the Company's side. In concluding the letter, the writer suggested that if workers were unhappy they should seek work elsewhere as he had done.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bob Babcock, "Power Cut In Marble Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 4 May 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial, "Marble Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 5 May 1966.

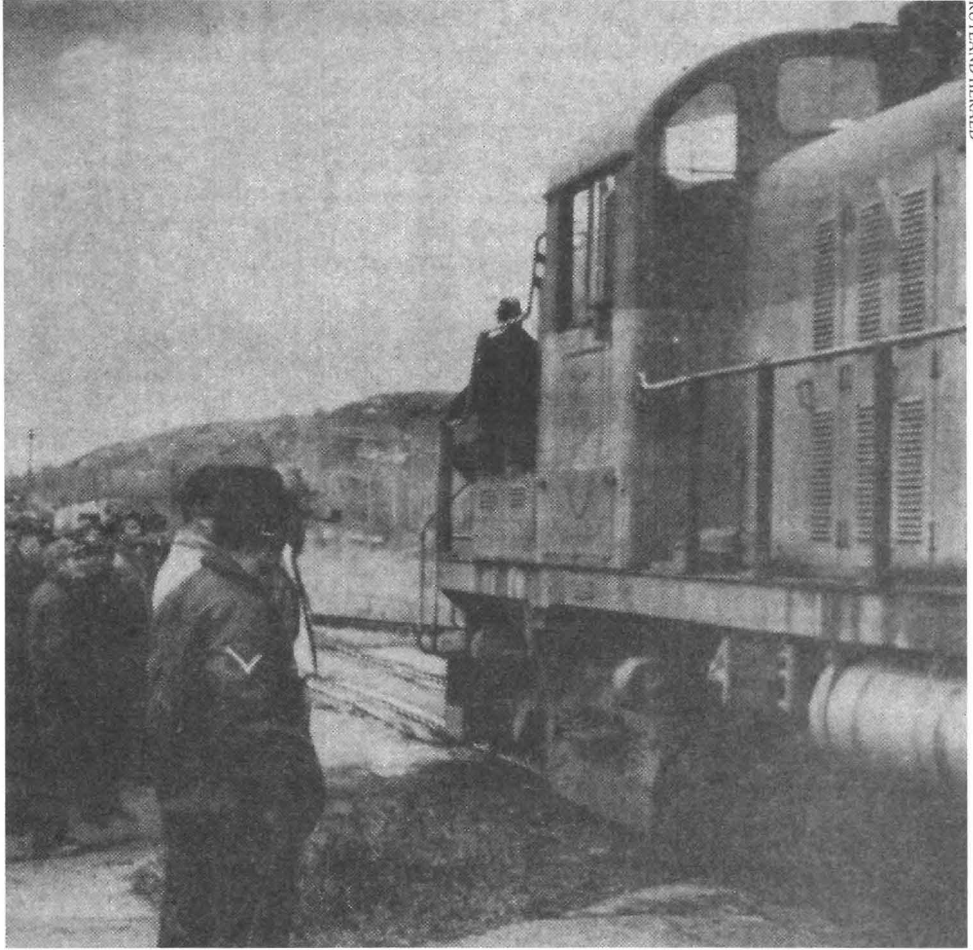
<sup>12</sup> Bob Babcock, "Marble-Hard Wall of Silence Marks Co., Union Officials," *Rutland Herald*, 6 May 1966.

<sup>13</sup> H. Michael Shanahan, "Ashamed," *Rutland Herald*, 9 May 1966.

<sup>14</sup> "Our Strike," *Rutland Herald*, 11 May 1966.

<sup>15</sup> "Disgrace," *Rutland Herald*, 12 May 1966.

On the fifth day of the walkout unionized engine operators refused to bring an engine into the West Rutland yard to hitch a load of marble. Delaware and Hudson officials moved the engine into the yard but removed two empty cars. The Company was successful in moving a machine by truck to St. Johnsbury depot on South Main Street in Rutland where it remained as teamsters in support of the strikers refused to drive the truck.<sup>16</sup>



RUTLAND HERALD

*State Trooper Lyle Cota, union members, and railroad officials watch as a Delaware & Hudson diesel engine moves toward the marble plant in West Rutland. A middle-of-the-track meeting between members of the railroad and the United Stone and Allied Products Workers resulted in permission to remove two empty freight cars in the yard but not the car loaded with marble from the Vermont Marble Company.*

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<sup>16</sup> "Action By Union Thwarts Marble Operations Friday," *Rutland Herald*, 7 May 1966.

Some letters seemed to drive the wedge between the two sides even further. A letter signed "Interested" expressed that men who had never gotten beyond fifth or sixth grade and half of whom could not read should be grateful that the Company employed them as nobody else would.<sup>17</sup> This letter prompted many responses. A letter writer expressed his belief that the letter must have been written by a person who earned a good salary. He further commented that these men might not be well educated but they had provided the labor that had resulted in many of our federal government buildings. He bitterly concluded his letter by stating that "many of the wives of the Big Shots who work in the offices will feel the pinch as well as Vermont Marble workers" if the Company were to close as a result of the strike.<sup>18</sup>

*Herald* reporter Bob Babcock gave strikers an opportunity to inform the paper's readership about the strike. William Nugent was a local union president who had 15 years of experience with the Company. He had started working as a helper for \$1.04 an hour and at the time of the strike was earning \$1.74 as a power and air compressor operator. On a yearly basis without overtime he was grossing \$3,619.20. Mike Shanahan had been hired in 1965 and was a machine operator as well as a fulltime college student. He made \$1.77 an hour. Al Park, married with two children, had eight years of experience at the Company, having started earning \$.93 an hour and at the time was earning \$2.05 as a layout man. The men also related that tool and die workers earned \$2.20 an hour, men in the quarries could earn from \$1.66 to \$1.83 an hour, and Italian marble carvers got anywhere from \$1.75 to \$2.21 for their craft. These wages were not favorable when compared to other industries. The men further related that fringe benefits were not any better. For example, they had no bereavement leave for deaths in the immediate family.<sup>19</sup>

A few days later Babcock met with Adams to get the Company's side of the story. Adams' main point was that the 5% increase in the present payroll of \$4.5 million dollars a year was almost 2% higher than the 3.2% wage increase limit asked by President Lyndon Johnson to curb inflationary trends. He again stated that foreign competition was hurting the domestic marble industry. He asserted that it was cheaper to ship marble from Europe to San Francisco than it was to ship that same marble from Vermont because of the low wages paid to European

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<sup>17</sup> "Three Cheers," *Rutland Herald*, 10 May 1966.

<sup>18</sup> "No Consideration," *Rutland Herald*, 12 May 1966.

<sup>19</sup> Bob Babcock, "Marble Workers Tell Their Side," *Rutland Herald*, 12 May 1966.



workers, the changes in the tariff laws, and inexpensive ocean freight charges. Besides European competition, the marble industry had to compete with the increased popularity of other building products, especially prefabricated concrete. As examples, he indicated that concrete had been used to construct Dulles Airport and would be used to build the new Washington Mall.<sup>20</sup>

Meetings with the two sides continued to be fruitless. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May they were back in court with their lawyers for a two-hour session trying to get changes in the temporary injunction order. Arthur E. Crowley, Jr. of the law firm, Bishop, Crowley, and Jeffords, represented the union. F. Ray Keyser and Charles Ryan of Ryan, Smith and Carbine handled the case for the Company. The union asked the judge for permission to increase picketers from five to ten while the Company requested that picketers be reduced from five to three. Keyser argued that ten picketers would be able to seal off roads and entrances to Company property. The Company presented several witnesses to substantiate their claims. Thomas P. Stafford, a Company director and superintendent of quarries, testified that he had counted 34 picketers at the main entrance to the Proctor plant and 12 in front of the machine shop on the first day of the strike. He saw them turn away several cars and said that the picketers were "quite militant." He also related a case of two West Rutland quarrymen who had crossed the picket lines on the first day of the strike but who now did not report to work because of threats they had received. Keyser also called John Fitzgerald, an employee of 18 years, to testify to a threatening letter that he had received. Denko testified as to his two incidents in Danby as well. In response to these and other testimonies Crowley asked if there were any substantial proof that union members had been involved in any of these incidents. It seemed that no one could provide any such proof.<sup>21</sup> The next day the court rendered its decision. The temporary injunction would continue with no changes.<sup>22</sup>

Concern began to surface that the strikers were attacking a dying giant. An editorial appeared in the *Herald* on May 20<sup>th</sup> that painted the domestic marble business as a depressed industry that was battling foreign competitors as well as alternative building products. It pointed out that Vermont Marble was attempting to diversify its business and explore new products and methods but that it was a struggling

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<sup>20</sup> Bob Babcock, "Strike: The Company's Viewpoint," *Rutland Herald*, 14 May 1966.

<sup>21</sup> Bob Babcock, "Judge Withholds Strike Opinion," *Rutland Herald*, 17 May 1966.

<sup>22</sup> Bob Babcock, "Court Continues Strike Injunction," *Rutland Herald*, 18 May 1966.

concern. The marble industry had not shared in the economic boom of 1965. While acknowledging that the marble industry might be “dying” in America the editor believed that neither the Company nor the employees would want the strike to be the cause of its death, particularly if the union shop stood in the way of a resolution to the strike.<sup>23</sup>

Starting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May the Company ran a series of paid announcements in the *Rutland Herald* that explained its side of the strike. The first one was entitled, “Marble Company Work Stopped. Who Wins?” Its avuncular tone read more like a civics lesson than anything else. It noted that as the strike extended into its fourth week both sides were becoming “more inflexible,” less patient, and more intractable. These circumstances meant that everyone, Company and employees, as well as surrounding communities, were losing out. It also expressed the notion that in a democracy “to injure or destroy another’s property, or to threaten personal harm because another disagrees, breaks down those rights, so fundamental and distinguished in our way of life.”<sup>24</sup>

The response to the Company’s statement was met with vandalism as things literally heated up in Proctor. On the evening of May 22<sup>nd</sup> while Company league bowlers were enjoying their end-of-the-season banquet a fire broke out behind the store block in downtown Proctor. A wooden structure behind the Proctor Super Market had been doused with kerosene and set on fire. The fire was discovered when one of the bowlers left the party on the third floor of the store block and went to his car which he had parked in the lot. Both strikers and nonunion men, all volunteer firemen, responded to the fire and confined the damage to the shed.<sup>25</sup>

The second published statement addressed the leadership of the union. It used the term “Company people” to describe all those individuals who had built the Vermont Marble Company since its inception. It charged that the work stoppage was under the supervision and direction of those from out-of-state and exhorted those whose lives were affected by the strike to seize the opportunity in negotiating their contract.<sup>26</sup> As in the 1935-1936 strike, the Company was blaming outside influences for the lack of a settlement.

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<sup>23</sup> Editorial, “Marble Strike Continues,” *Rutland Herald* 20 May 1966.

<sup>24</sup> “Marble Company Work Stopped. Who Wins?,” *Rutland Herald*, 21 May 1966.

<sup>25</sup> “Marble Company Building Is Burned, Arson Termed Cause,” *Rutland Herald* 23 May 1966.

<sup>26</sup> “Marble Company Work Stopped,” *Rutland Herald*, 24 May 1966.

Four days after this pronouncement appeared in the *Herald* 250 union members voted 227-23 to reject what the Company referred to as its "final offer" of a ten cent an hour increase in the first year, and a five cent increase in the final two years of the contract. Williams stated that the union had a three-hour meeting after the vote in which they agreed to drop the thirty-five cent increase and a union shop. Instead they would ask for union security, a system that called for members to join the union if they wished, and if they did not join, workers would then be obligated to pay an amount equal to union dues. The Company rejected the new proposal and Adams declared the negotiations at an impasse.<sup>27</sup>

In the June-July edition of the *Vermont Marble Chips* Frank Stevenson, the president, described the impact the strike was having on the Company. He reported that orders were being cancelled on a daily basis and the Company's backlog of work was being meted out to other companies. He also explained the Company's stance on the union shop. He stated that the Company was concerned with the individual rights and welfare of their employees and hence their opposition to a union shop.<sup>28</sup>

The perception among strikers at the time was that a union shop would bring higher wages like those enjoyed by Company employees in its San Francisco branch. The union had distributed material that compared wages in its California and Vermont plants. To dispel this belief, the Company once again resorted to paying for space in the *Herald*. Its piece was entitled "The San Francisco Story." The Company explained that it operated a small finishing shop there but in recent years it had lost money. Men employed in that shop worked a four-day week due to the lack of projects and that earlier in the year a third of them had been laid off. If the branch continued to lose money, the Company said it would have to close it.<sup>29</sup> It is difficult to speculate if the final comment was meant to place doubt in the minds of the men relative to the financial conditions of the Company but the message must have given some of the strikers cause to wonder about the stability of Vermont Marble.

Another Company statement that appeared in the *Herald* addressed wages. The tone was somewhat condescending and sounded like an Economics 101 lecture. It noted that the money received in selling marble

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<sup>27</sup> Bob Babcock, "Strike Talks Break Off; No New Negotiations Set," *Rutland Herald*, 28 May 1966.

<sup>28</sup> "President's Paragraph," *Vt. Marble Co. Chips*, XXIX, No. 2, June-July 1966, p.5.

<sup>29</sup> "The San Francisco Story," *Rutland Herald*, 2 June 1966.

predicated workers' wages. It further explained that the Company bid on jobs and that the bid price was based on wages, taxes, insurance, and other expenses. The company was only being awarded 20% of the jobs primarily due to the European market where marble was 20-30% cheaper. The company concluded that it was not a matter of what it would like to pay for wages or what union leaders demanded, but what could be paid for wages while providing jobs and benefits and staying operational.<sup>30</sup>

A 1962 round of U.S. tariff negotiations had put the Company in a difficult position against foreign competitors. In the past there had been no tariffs on imported blocks of marble. When the United States lifted the tariff on finished marble the Italians, in particular, decided that the situation now allowed them to bid on projects in America. The result was that they were underbidding by some 50% of what companies like Georgia Marble and Vermont Marble were bidding. Federal government projects, though, had to buy from American industries.<sup>31</sup>

The last *Herald* statement focused on the wages proposed by the Company. It avowed that it had offered the best wages it could and "for anyone to hold out hope that it can be increased, only holds out hope for the impossible." It again noted that the Company had operated at a loss in 1965 and for each of the months in the current year and that the increases it proposed would have to be paid by borrowing money. It offered to increase wages ten cents an hour across the board in the first year, to increase life insurance and hospital benefits, to make adjustments in some job classifications, and to increase wages by five cents an hour for the remaining two years of the contract. Costs for these benefits would be more than one million dollars for the three years of the contract.<sup>32</sup>

The strikers were undeterred and continued to insist on union security and higher wages. The *Herald* reported that at a meeting on June 9th the two sides were joined by Louis Lavin, the labor representative for Governor Philip Hoff. This meeting was unsuccessful in ending the strike. At this point only a few men had crossed the picket lines and production had ceased in the ten area plants. An editorial in the same issue of the paper had a foreboding tone as it suggested that the unfavorable situation of the marble industry coupled with the ad-

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<sup>30</sup> "What About Wages?," *Rutland Herald*, 3 June 1966.

<sup>31</sup> F. Ray Keyser, interview by the author, 12 September 2011.

<sup>32</sup> "The Wage Offer," *Rutland Herald*, 4 June 1966.

<sup>33</sup> "Stalemate From Strike Meeting," *Rutland Herald*, 10 June 1966.

ditional costs involved in any strike settlement might very well bring the Vermont Marble Company to "its knees" as one letter to the editor suggested but in so doing those currently on strike would suffer the consequences of losing their jobs. In addition, the editor said that there were not a sufficient number of positions available in the area for those who would be out of jobs if the Company were forced to close its doors.<sup>34</sup>



ROUTLAND HERALD

*State Police Lieutenant Lloyd Potter faces a group of Vermont Marble Company strikers who tried to prevent the shipment of a load of waste marble into the West Rutland plant. At the request of management officials stepped onto the tracks and told the strikers that they were blocking a public way.*

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<sup>34</sup> Editorial, "Marble Mainstay," *Rutland Herald*, 10 June 1966.

The union was also summoned back into court in early June when the Delaware and Hudson Railroad Corporation asked for an injunction against it. The railroad submitted a bill of complaint citing several instances where strikers trespassed on railroad property, obstructed tracks, threatened its officials, and damaged property. Judge Sylvester issued an injunction which forbade union members to “coerce, restrain, or intimidate any railroad employes (sic) by threats or acts of violence, or to block the passage of any train or to damage the railroad’s property.”<sup>35</sup>

The railroad was not the only concern that was being affected by the strike. Area merchants requested that Governor Hoff investigate the strike because they had felt the financial pinch from the lack of the payroll.<sup>36</sup> Lavin’s presence at the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting allowed him to give a firsthand accounting to the Governor who subsequently sent identical telegrams to both sides, asking them to submit the process to a fact finding committee. He wrote, “We are becoming increasingly concerned with the labor dispute, and I cannot help but feel that it will have harmful effects on the economy of the local community and the state as a whole...”. Stevenson wired the Governor to express the Company’s willingness to furnish facts and to participate in the proceedings.<sup>37</sup> The union also agreed to cooperate.<sup>38</sup>

The final negotiation session occurred on June 25<sup>th</sup>. On June 26<sup>th</sup> an estimated 350 union members voted unanimously to end the 56-day strike. Both sides indicated that they were satisfied with the contract. Williams said he was “very pleased, very happy.” Adams stated that, “We are very satisfied with the entire contract.”<sup>39</sup>

The Company had not accepted a union shop or union security but had agreed to maintenance membership, a form of union security that obligated all members of the union to stay in the union for the duration of the contract. There was a ten-day escape period at the end of the second year of the contract but if the member did not choose to leave the union during that period he had to continue his membership until the rest of the contract expired. The Company granted a ten cent an hour wage increase in the first year, an eight cent increase in the second, and a nine cent increase in the final year. In addition, they agreed to wage

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<sup>35</sup> Bob Babcock, “Another Order Against Strikers,” *Rutland Herald*, 8 June 1966.

<sup>36</sup> “Strike Session Set For Today,” *Rutland Herald*, 25 June 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Marsha Feldman, “Marble Firm Answers Hoff,” *Rutland Herald*, 17 June 1966.

<sup>38</sup> “Union Response Received By Hoff,” *Rutland Herald*, 27 June 1966.

<sup>39</sup> Bob Babcock, Strike At End For Vermont Marble Firm,” *Rutland Herald*, 27 June 1966.

adjustments and fringe benefits. Workers with more than fifteen years of service were granted three weeks of paid vacation beginning in the second year of the contract. Procedures for job bidding were established as well. Specifically, the Company agreed that:

1. It would publish a letter not discouraging union membership.
2. It would provide the union with the names and addresses of all of its employees.
3. The second shift workers would get an additional two cents an hour and the third shift would receive a three cents an hour increase.
4. The probationary period would be decreased from 60 to 45 days.
5. All vacations in 1966 would be guaranteed.
6. Overtime would be equally distributed.
7. It would not discriminate against strikers.
8. All injunctions would be dismissed.<sup>40</sup>

It was over. The Company estimated that the strike had cost \$500,000.00. Strikers had survived the eight-week walkout with the assistance of strikers' pay, contributions from sympathizers, personal savings, and odd jobs. Now the men could go back to their jobs and the Company again could get back to the marble business. An editorial called for "wholehearted employe (sic) cooperation."<sup>41</sup> While both sides might have been happy about the end of the strike nothing had changed in the marble business. The Vermont Marble Company, once a powerful presence in the marble industry, still had to deal with foreign competition and the growing demand for alternative products. Stevenson noted that during the strike 17% of the employees had taken permanent positions elsewhere and the Company was now handicapped in some departments due to their departure.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly, the Company was employing fewer men after the strike. On 30 April 1966, there had been 550 hourly paid workers in the marble division.<sup>43</sup> At the end of the year there were 484. At the end of January 1968 there were 40 fewer workers than there were at the end of 1966. Barton N. Reissig, vice-president of general operations, noted that skilled labor was lost to industries in the area with defense work and higher rates of pay, leaving the Company with "less desirable and

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<sup>40</sup> Bob Babcock, "Strike At End For Vermont Marble Firm," *Rutland Herald*, 27 June 1966.

<sup>41</sup> Editorial, "Marble Strike Ends," *Rutland Herald*, 28 June 1966.

<sup>42</sup> "Looking Ahead," *Vt. Marble Chips*, XXIX No. 3, August-September 1966.

<sup>43</sup> Barton N. Reissig, Report of Operations for 1966, p. 16, 1966 Annual.

<sup>44</sup> Barton N. Reissig, Report of Operations for 1967, p. 16, 1967 Annual.

less efficient help.”<sup>45</sup> Joseph Nagy, Jr., general superintendent of the West Rutland division, related a similar situation. He reported that he had lost several experienced men and their replacements had proved problematic as they were not steady and lost time while others stayed only two or three weeks and quit.<sup>46</sup>

The company would not survive for long. A little more than ten years after the anniversary of the strike’s conclusion the Vermont Marble Company was sold to Pluess-Staufer A.G., a Swiss-based firm that dealt with ground marble products. Company people could no longer boast of working on projects such as the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, or other significant federal projects. The Company’s closing altered the look of Proctor. The marble yards that once were stocked with marble disappeared. The parking lots were empty. The seven-thirty, noon, and four o’clock whistles were silenced. There were no men to call to work. There was no Company.

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<sup>45</sup> Barton N. Reissig, Report of Operations for 1966, p.1, 1966 Annual.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Nagy, Monumental Report for 1966, p.1, 1966 Annual.